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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/609,481	07/01/2003	Toshiaki Fukuhara	Q76417	2209
23373	7590	03/12/2004	EXAMINER	
SUGHRUE MION, PLLC 2100 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W. SUITE 800 WASHINGTON, DC 20037			FRANK, RODNEY T	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2856	

DATE MAILED: 03/12/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/609,481	FUKUHARA ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Rodney T. Frank	2856

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-3 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-3 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 08/07/2003.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Weisse (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2004/0016296). Weisse discloses a level meter for motor vehicle fuel tanks comprises a float element (26). With the float element (26), a lever (18) is connected that is adapted to be pivoted about a pivot axis (28). Further, the level meter comprises a position sensor (10) as well as a position transmitter (16) connected with the lever (18). At the level of the position sensor (10), the position transmitter (16) is connected with the lever (18). According to the invention, the position transmitter (16) cooperates with the position sensor (10) in a contactless manner (See the Abstract).

3. With respect to claim 1, a non-contact type liquid level sensor comprising a sensor housing; a rotary shaft, rotatably mounted on the sensor housing; a float, vertically movable with a change of a liquid level; a float arm, having a first end mounted on the float and a second end coupled to the rotary shaft; such that the rotary shaft is rotated with a vertical movement of the float; an annular magnet, coupled to the rotary shaft and rotating together with the rotary shaft; a pair of stators, disposed in the sensor housing so as to confront an outer peripheral surface of the magnet; and a magnetoelodic transducing element disposed between the first ends of the stators, for detecting a change of a magnetic flux density in the stators, which is

caused by a turn of the magnet, and for converting the detected change of the magnetic flux density into an electrical signal, wherein second ends of the stators are spaced from each other to form a gap having an opening angle within a range from 50 to 200 degrees. This is disclosed in the Summary of the invention portion of the disclosure of Weisse. Though the stators are not disclosed to be arcuate, arcuate stators are a design choice that is well established within the art and the device disclosed by Weisse would perform in an equivalent manner to that of the present invention.

With respect to claims 2 and 3, though these limitations are not explicitly disclosed, these limitations are viewed as design choices that are well within the preview of one of ordinary skill in the art.

Conclusion

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Byrne et al. (U.S. Patent Number 4,986,124) discloses a level sensor, which is considered in the general state of the art of the present invention.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Rodney T. Frank whose telephone number is (571) 272-2193. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9am -5:30p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hezron E. Williams can be reached on (571) 272-2208. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

RTF

February 24, 2004

Hezron S. Williams
HEZRON WILLIAMS
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800